

Nebraska Information Technology Commission  
**Community Technology Fund 2002**

## **Application Form**

Project Title: [Connect IT Omaha](#)

Submitting Entity: [Omaha Public Library](#)

Grant Amount Requested: [\\$25,000.00](#)

Project Contact Information (Name, address, telephone, fax, and e-mail address):

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### **Executive Summary**

*Provide a one or two paragraph summary of the proposed project. This summary will be used in other externally distributed documents and should therefore clearly and succinctly describe the project and the information technology required.*

The Omaha Public Library, in partnership with the AIM Institute, Greater Omaha Workforce Development, Opportunities/Jobs/Careers (OJC), and two local businesses will develop the prototype for a proposed area-wide public information system offered through public kiosks, giving even those without computer connectivity critical access to the wealth of digital information available from governmental and non-profit sources, including the public library, state, and local government. When the full network is implemented, developers expect to provide over 10,000 users monthly with coordinated access to a wide variety of career development/employment information designed to prepare the region's 21st Century workforce and address labor availability issues.

This project intends to make government more accessible by placing, at local malls and in more remote but high-traffic shopping areas, library kiosks with high-speed Internet connections and featuring links to city, county, and state governments as well as career information and library collections. We are asking for funds to initiate the pilot installation for the entire program. The opening placement funded by this grant would be located at the busiest of the potential sites to test response and evaluate the entire program.

## Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

### 1. Describe the project, including:

- *Problem statement and needs assessment*

Many people who attend one of the 200+ annual free computer literacy classes at Omaha Public Library do not have home computers. Librarians know there are also some people who do not and will not go to the library. These same librarians recognize their institutions have limited budgets and limited hours and, if access for the underserved is to be a reality, work stations must be provided with even better availability than the library's 63 hours per week.

- *Goals (i.e., increasing Internet literacy)*

To increase citizen access to digital information resources, including library databases, email and essential records from nonprofits and municipal, county, and state governments.

To increase awareness of the partners' free technology education and career enhancement services.

To increase the coordinated delivery of workforce development information and referral to residents of the region through the development of a computer kiosk-based information delivery system.

- *Project activities or outputs (specific, measurable steps to get to the goal--i.e., offering six sessions of classes). Include training and staff development activities if appropriate.*

Develop selection criteria for kiosks, focusing on visibility, potential for use, access by high poverty area residents, supportiveness of host organization, region-wide distribution, security, etc. **Measure:** Selection criteria are developed and on file by March 1.

Identify at least 35 kiosk locations and conduct a technology audit of each. **Measure:** Twenty-five kiosk location are identified and on file. 100 percent receive a technology audit by April 15.

Based upon selection criteria and technology audit results, select 10 potential kiosk locations. **Measure:** Ten potential sites are selected by April 30, with the highest traffic location identified for pilot study.

Using library standards for kiosk selection, research kiosk vendors and products. **Measure:** At least two bids are received for kiosks that meet library standards.

Select and purchase pilot kiosk **Measure:** Contract signed by May 30.

Install kiosk in location selected, networking it to the Internet. **Measure:** Installed by August 1, 2002.

Develop an Internet portal to serve as the gateway to partner resources accessed through the kiosk. **Measure:** Internet portal is developed and implemented. Users rate the portal an average of 3.5 on a 5-point Likert scale.

Develop online evaluation system to collect users' suggestions for improvements. **Measure:** System is developed by opening date for the kiosk. Subsequently, measures will be taken quarterly.

Evaluate project to determine effectiveness of kiosks. **Measure:** Targeted outcomes are achieved. Modifications are based on evaluation of results.

Connect IT Omaha partners will evaluate the success of this pilot project toward their goal of eventually installing a minimum of ten computer kiosk stations at strategic points such as malls and other important commercial centers with extended hours (—at least one in each municipal and county voting district, as well as one in each neighboring county). If evaluation warrants, they will seek funding aid for the next phase of this project from other donors. **Measure:** Evaluation is positive and program can move forward with a high confidence of success.

- *Expected outcomes (impact on the project's beneficiaries--i.e. at least 60 participants will learn to search for information on the Internet searches and send e-mail)*

Installation and measurement of use of the first of a proposed network of kiosks will allow further evaluation of project potential and usage.

The kiosk will generate a steady 1,000 uses per month after the sixth month of placement.

The kiosk will increase the numbers of underemployed and unemployed region residents finding full-time career path employment.

## Project Justification

2. *Explain how the proposed project supports one or more of the funding priorities by describing how the project:*
- *Uses information technology to address community needs related to community and economic development, the delivery of local government and library services, and health care.*

This project brings information essential to life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century directly to the citizens where they are most likely to come into contact with it. The portals that will be offered will allow citizens to access the information of their choice, whether for career-related advancement or for community-based services. It will also allow full access to the library's catalog and instructions for receiving service. Additionally, library cardholders will have access to all licensed databases in the library's collection.

- *Uses information technology to address community needs in innovative ways or initiates the use of information technology to address community needs.*

Currently, Nebraska offers no form of one-stop information resource. This will be the first and a model upon which a statewide resource could eventually be built in communities of all sizes.

- *Demonstrates strong collaboration within a community or region in addressing IT development.*

The key partners are the strongest IT players in eastern Nebraska. This project brings them to the table to discuss more uniform development of IT standards.

3. *Describe the expected benefits (both tangible and intangible) of the proposed project. If applicable, include any economic benefits or long-term cost savings.*

The most important benefit is that of increasing citizen exposure to IT-based information delivery systems and other new information formats. (As James Madison said, "A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both.")

This project affords citizens with increased knowledge of IT and other career opportunities in the state.

Other tangible benefits are those which the partnership aims to measure, as outlined above.

The intangible benefits include reducing duplication of effort and building cooperation among fellow travelers who are targeting the same populations in providing excellent service.

## Technical Impact

4. *Describe the hardware, software, and communications needed for this project and explain why these choices were made.*



A kiosk is simply an enclosed computer with extra-heavy-duty parts and cabinet connected to other computers via a telecommunications protocol (see the sample illustrations, above). The kiosks pictured are but two of many designs which the partnership is in the process of evaluating for durability and ease of use. A business partner has agreed to provide the broadband telecommunications connection to the library's server from an initial location (which is still to be determined). The partnership's preliminary evaluation is leaning toward a unit provided by either 3-M Corporation or PIC Systems, Inc. because of these issues of durability and ease of use. The initial (bridge) software is provided by each vendor, allowing the library to use its quarter-of-a-million dollar database software as the basic (home page) portal. The computer will feature a high-speed Pentium processor with an SVGA 17" touch-screen monitor, fully functioning keyboard with built-in pointing device, TCP/IP Ethernet and Token Ring Support in a steel cabinet of ADA-compliant design. Any kiosk will be standard 100 v with a duplex fixture (15 amps max) and will integrate with the epixtech library automation system (OPAC) via Telnet or the Web. Any kiosk will be FCC Part 15 and 68 certified and UL listed.

5. *Address any technical issues with the proposed technology including:*

- *Conformity with generally accepted industry standards. Projects which interface with other state systems (such as distance learning systems) should also address NITC technical standards and guidelines.*

The two systems that look most promising both adhere to accepted industry standards and are sold and maintained by leading companies. Providing connectivity to the Internet and to the project's partners could be a challenge – especially given the fact that any potential host location could be using a different technology. To address this issue, the partnership is looking to wireless technology to assist in overcoming this potential barrier. The technology evaluations must be performed before the choice of connectivity is made.

- *Compatibility with existing institutional and/or statewide infrastructure.*

Most of the public libraries of size in the State of Nebraska are using library software from *epixtech, Incorporated*. These libraries include Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney, Grand Island, Fremont, Bellevue, Beatrice, Hastings, Scottsbluff and York.

- *Reliability, security and scalability (future needs for growth or adaptation).*

The [Connect IT Omaha](#) partners have contacted libraries using kiosks for the delivery of information and have discovered no major problems over the longest period of use (five years). As mentioned above, the project is ultimately scalable to serve the entire state, or could be confined to that region served by Omaha Public Library. The units provided by one of the major vendors have experienced neither significant downtime nor problems with maintenance. Since the Omaha Public Library has nine branches, which are near any initial kiosk, service for printer supplies and routine maintenance would be provided from the nearest branch library.

6. *Describe how technical support will be provided.*

The vendors of choice have field service representatives available for major issues involving equipment. Technical staff from the partnership will address network issues. With the anticipated usage of the kiosks in mind (1,000 per kiosk per month), maintaining the systems to ensure access is always available could be a daunting barrier. However, each Omaha Public Library has a staff member designated as the technology contact with the MIS office at the Main library. Each of these individuals is technology-focused and has had training beyond basic computer use. So any branch assigned to oversee the initial placement will have competent staff members to inspect and maintain the station, with backup provided from the MIS office.

## Preliminary Plan for Implementation

7. *Describe the project sponsor(s) and stakeholder acceptance. If letters of support are included, list the entities or individuals submitting letters of support and briefly summarize the letter's content. Include information on any match being provided by project sponsors.*

**Omaha Public Library** Providing Community Information and Reference Resources. The library will also give direct links to the City of Omaha, Douglas County, and to State Government.

**Opportunities/Jobs/Careers (OJC)** Will provide career and training resources gateway for job seekers and employers.

**Greater Omaha Workforce Development** Will provide access to their one-stop career center.

**AIM Institute** Will provide access to its many technological career resources, as well as the expertise of its superior staff.

**District 66 (Westside Community Schools)** Basic Education  
Opportunities and Instructional Support Services

Each of the [Connect IT Omaha \(see Appendix\)](#) partners listed will be giving matches in-kind of personnel. The Library, AIM and the Greater Omaha Workforce Development Agency will additionally provide hardware, supplies, and other forms of cash match, as outlined in the budget narrative, below.

8. *Describe the project team, including their roles, responsibilities, and experience.*

**Dr. Ronald R. Heezen**, Director of the Omaha Public Library System. With over thirty years experience in libraries, Ron has served as head of systems for libraries such as Dallas Public. He has built cooperatives of libraries and their fellow travelers including the largest consortium in the State of Texas. He has automated three libraries. He will be responsible for bringing players to the table and facilitating the continued growth of the partnership as well as seeking additional funding for further implementation, if the pilot is successful.

**Janet Davenport**, Omaha Public Library's Deputy Director for Technology. Janet has overseen Omaha's automation efforts for over ten years. She is well versed in technological issues and has a support staff of four full time technologists and other part time staff. Janet will oversee the technical aspects of the project in conjunction with the technical support staffs of the partners.

**Maria Vazquez**, Director, Greater Omaha Workforce Development Agency. Maria comes to GOWDA from the AIM Institute. She is technically competent and proficient in marketing. Maria will oversee the career applications of the kiosk network in conjunction with the AIM staff.

Other team members include:

**Kathleen Berg Eagen**, Associate Director, AIM Institute

**Dr. Ken Bird**, Superintendent, Westside Community Schools (District 66)

**Gail Braun**, Grant Coordinator, Office of the Mayor, City of Omaha

**Patricia Crisler**, Director, Opportunities/Jobs/Careers

**Connie Eichhorn**, Principal, Career Center/Coordinator, Adult Education, Omaha Public Schools

**Patrick Esser**, Applications Analyst, Omaha Public Library

**Adam Haeder**, Information Technology Manager, AIM Institute

**John Jeanetta**, Director of Postsecondary Initiatives, AIM Institute

**Maggie Kalkowski**, Project Coordinator, Opportunities/Jobs/Careers

**Hector Mota**, IT Manager, Greater Omaha Workforce Development

**James Overton**, Applications Analyst, City of Omaha

**Norma Riley**, Executive Director, Omaha Public Library Foundation

9. *List the major milestones and a timeline for completing each milestone.*

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Select and purchase pilot kiosk. **Measure:** Contract signed by May 15, 2002.

Install kiosk in location selected, networking it to the Internet. **Measure:** Installed by July 1, 2002.

Develop an Internet portal to serve as the gateway to partner resources accessed through the kiosk. **Measure:** Internet portal is developed and implemented. Users rate the portal an average of 3.5 on a 5-point Likert scale.

Develop online evaluation system to collect users' suggestions for improvements. **Measure:** System is developed by opening date (July 1, 2002) for the kiosk. Subsequently, measures will be taken quarterly.

Evaluate project to determine effectiveness of kiosks. **Measure:** Targeted outcomes are achieved. Modifications are based on evaluation of results.

[Connect IT Omaha](#) partners will evaluate the success of this pilot project toward their goal of eventually installing a minimum of ten computer kiosk stations at strategic points such as malls and other important commercial centers with extended hours (—at least one in each municipal and county voting district, as well as one in each neighboring county). If evaluation warrants, they will seek funding aid for the next phase of this project from other donors. **Measure:** Evaluation is positive and program can move forward with a high confidence of success, with major grant applications being filed with private foundations by January 1, 2003.

10. *Describe how the project will be sustained.*

Continuity and sustainability are always an issue. However, the [Connect IT Omaha](#) partners have addressed these issues at the forefront, with over 60 percent of the



start-up costs being provided by these same partners. The use of wireless technologies could result in minimal ongoing expenses, as would a partnership with the broadband provider who is anxious to cooperate with the project partners. Also, the kiosks themselves will be designed to collect a charge for printer usage. Paper, cartridges, and even the printers themselves will be amortized through these charges. Kiosks and their continued use will be a budget line item for Omaha Public Library, with strong support from key council members and the Mayor's office

*11. Describe the project's evaluation plan, including measurement and assessment methods that will verify project outcomes.*

The measures are outlined in numbers 9 and 1c, above and include **standard Likert scale measurements of user satisfaction**. With a clear timeline, the partners will always know if they are on track in achieving the steps toward implementation.

## Financial Analysis and Budget

The budget will be scored on reasonableness (up to 10 points), mathematical accuracy (up to 5 points), and the strength and appropriateness of the match (up to 5 points).

Provide the following financial information:

	CTF Grant Funding	Cash Match (5)	In-Kind Match (6)	Other Funding Sources (7)	Total
Personnel Costs (1)			23,062.84		23,062.84
Contractual Services (2)		10,500.00			10,500.00
Capital Expenditures (3) (Hardware, software, etc.)	25,000.00	5,000.00	4,000.00	16,000.00	50,000.00
Supplies and Materials			2,200.00		2,200.00
Telecommunications		5,000.00			5,000.00
Training					2,200.00
Travel		370.95			370.95
Other costs (4)		9,500.00			9,500.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	25,000.00	<sup>A</sup> 30,370.95	<sup>B</sup> 31,462.84	16,000.00	<sup>C</sup> 102,833.79

Match Percent = 60%

Match Requirement: This grant requires a 20% match. Please calculate your match by using the formula below to ensure your application meets this requirement:

Total Cash Match (A) + Total In-Kind Match (B)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ >= .20

Total Project Cost (C)

## Budget Narrative

Several categories (see below) **require** further itemization.

1. *Please include estimated number of hours or full-time equivalent (FTE) by position. Include separate totals for salary and fringe benefits. If it is necessary to itemize on a separate sheet, include only the subtotal in this table.*

The Project utilizes staff from each of the partners for differing purposes. In the initial, organizational meetings, the directors or representative administrative staff participated in the discussions and will meet for appropriate follow-ups. All salaries are based upon the average salary of the assembled group multiplied by the number of hours averaged for each meeting (and anticipated for future meetings). Total expected involvement – 72 hours.

The Technologists tend to have higher salaries than some of their administrative counterparts involved in the organizational meetings, but fewer individuals participate in the technological discussions and planning. Total expected involvement – 60 hours.

Site evaluations are conducted by a group of four people examining 35 potential sites. The team includes two administrators and two technologists. Total expected involvement – 280 hours.

Negotiations for placement of the kiosks will include 15 potential sites, with two-hour meetings for each, involving two administrative personnel. Total expected involvement – 60 hours.

[Connect IT Omaha](#) partners will meet with at least four potential vendors, allowing each to show their wares. Meetings will last approximately 2 hours each and will involve the technologists only. Total expected involvement – 48 hours.

The organizers will meet for the one-hour bid opening. Total expected involvement – 8 hours.

The technology staff member from the nearest branch library will visit the kiosk a minimum of one time each week for about one hour each time. Total expected involvement – 52 hours.

The CFO of the library will evaluate and statistically analyze responses from the Likert rating tool. Total expected involvement – 10.5 hours.

TOTAL FTE – .28

2. *Please itemize other contractual expenses on separate sheet.*

Kiosk maintenance and supplies are tallied on the spreadsheet attached.

3. *Please itemize capital expenditures by categories (hardware, software, network, and other) on a separate sheet.*

Please see the attached spreadsheet.

4. *Please itemize other operating expenses on a separate sheet.*

Please see the attached spreadsheet.

5. *Please indicate the source of any cash match.*

The partners expect to pay \$30,380.95 in cash match. Most of that will come from the Omaha Public Library, AIM Institute, and Greater Omaha Workforce Development.

6. *Please indicate the source of any in-kind match and how it will be documented.*

The partners will be the source for all in-kind match documented. This allocates personnel, benefits, and a portion of the annual software maintenance for the library management package. The [Connect IT Omaha](#) partners will keep track of hours and salaries at future meetings and allocate personnel costs accordingly.

7. *Please provide a breakdown of any other external funding sources. Sources of external funds may include grants from federal agencies or private foundations.*

The partners are applying for grants totaling \$1,250,000.00 from other sources to see the entire project (for which this is the pilot) completed in the Eastern Region of Nebraska. Sources from which funds are being sought and for which applications are being made include Federal Library Services and Technology Act monies, Cox Communications, the Kellogg Foundation, and the Ford Foundation. Since the applications for some of these are not due at this time, the partners have not calculated them in the total project cost. The partners will, however, use any grant offered from the NITC as proof of match, etc. for these other applications, should the award be made.

## **Connect IT Omaha Partners**

Each of the project's partners will contribute to the implementation and continuation of the Connect IT Omaha project. Each partner will release personnel to participate on the Advisory Board and contribute to all aspects of project development and evaluation. Additional commitments of support will include the following:

- AIM Institute – will assist in purchasing and installing the kiosks, recruiting members for project participation, and marketing project activities.
- Greater Omaha Workforce Development Institute – will assist maintaining kiosks, recruiting members for project participation, and marketing project activities.
- Omaha Public Library – will assist in purchasing and installing the kiosks, direct the maintenance of kiosks, and assist in marketing project activities.
- Omaha Public Schools – will host a kiosk in the Career Center and assist in marketing project activities to students.
- Opportunities | Jobs | Careers – will assist in purchasing and installing kiosks, recruiting members for project participation, and marketing project activities.
- Westside Community Schools – will host a kiosk in the Career Center and assist in marketing project activities to students.